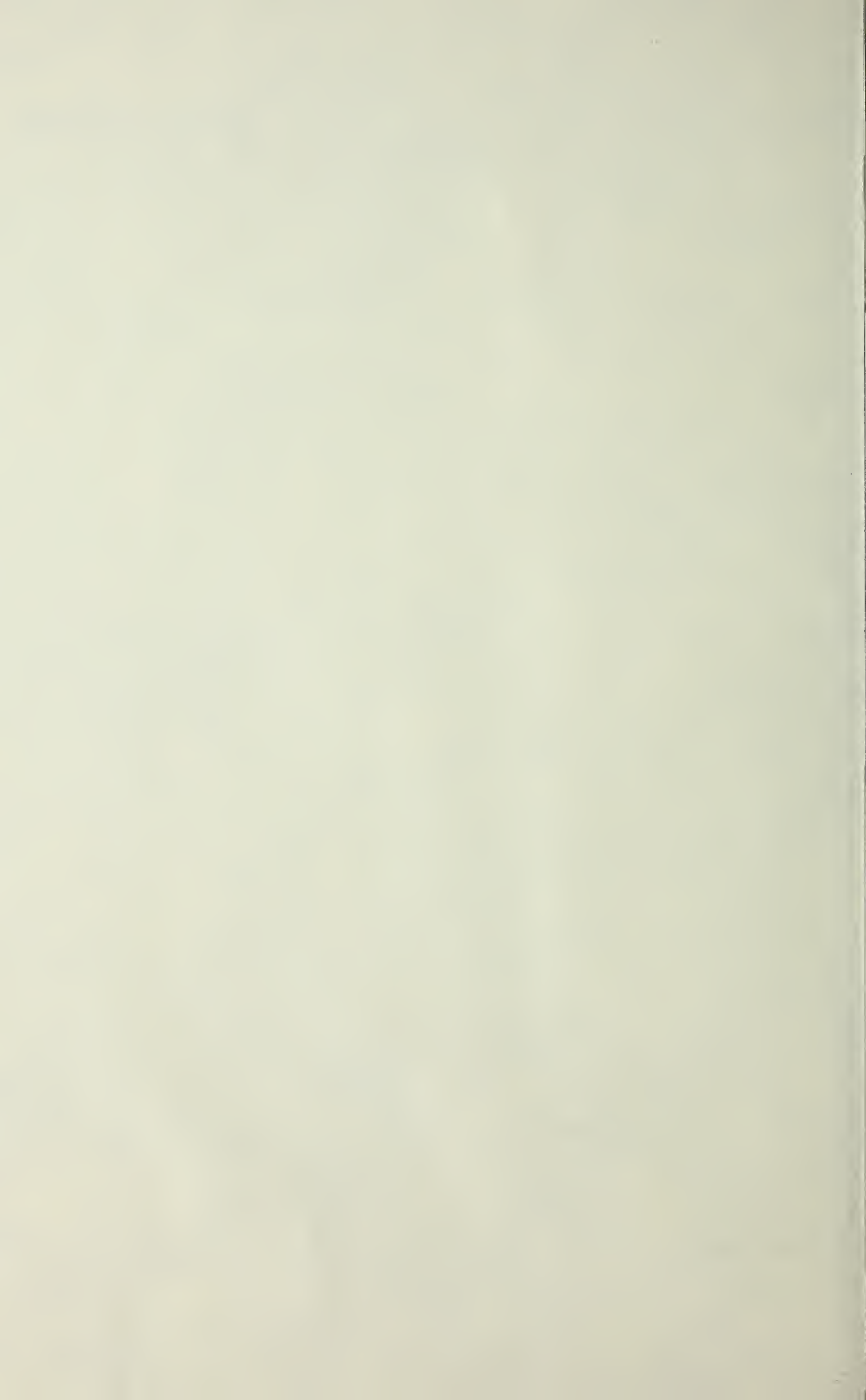
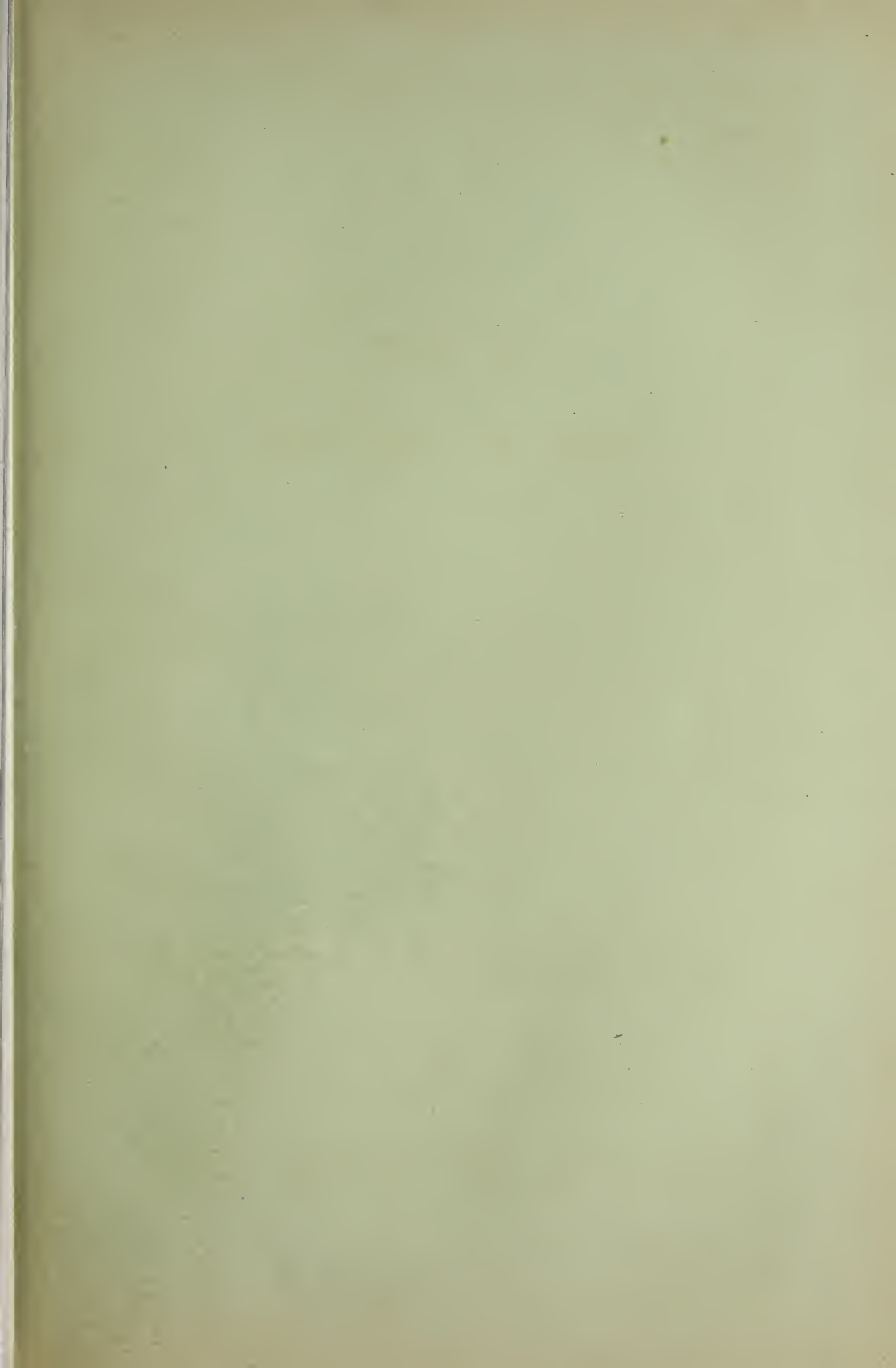


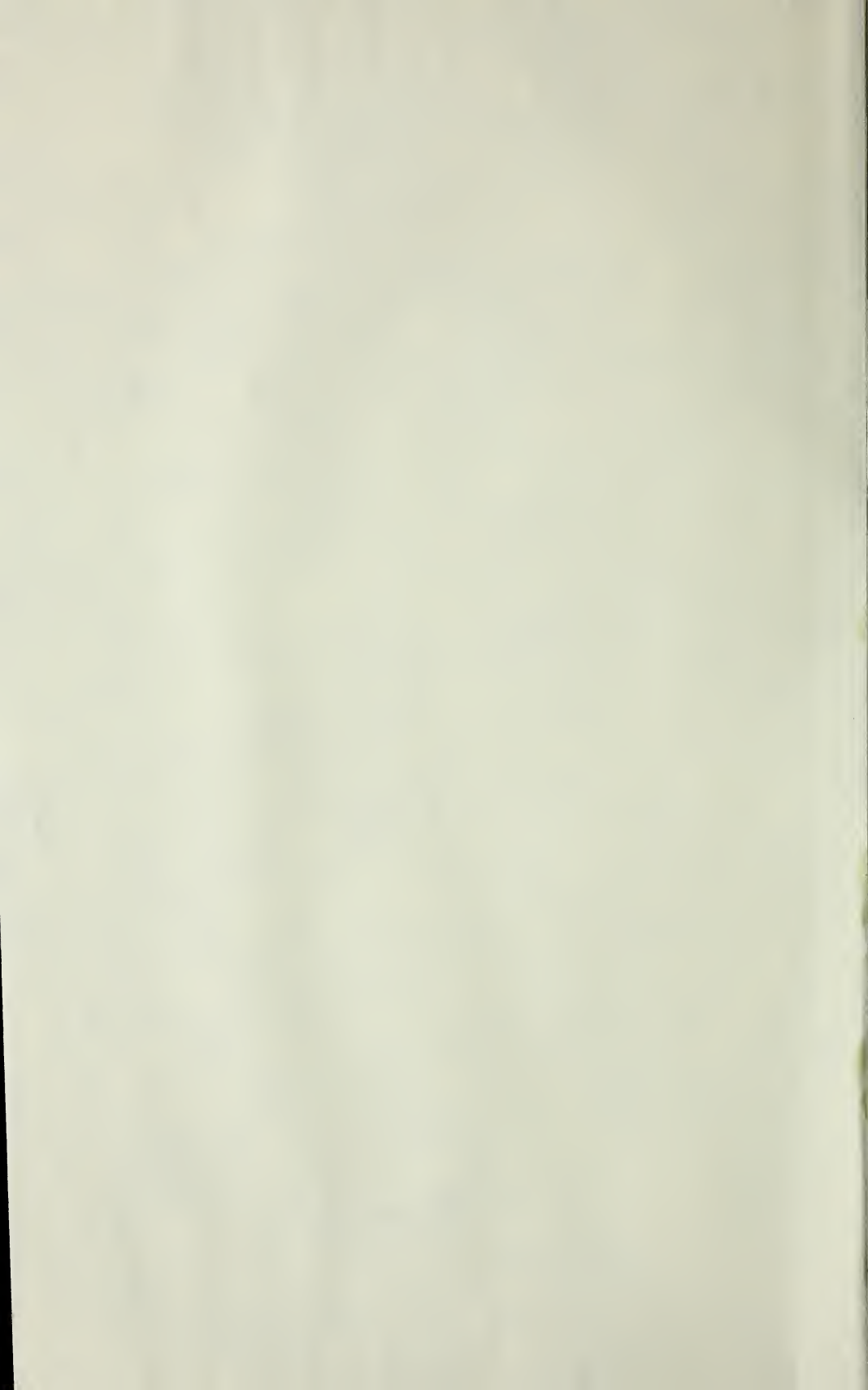
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State Roads and Highways

in

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NO.8

Eastern Penna. and Lebanon County.

PAPER READ BEFORE THE

LEBANON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

APRIL 17, 1903,

—BY—

Thos. Theo. B. Klein.

Harrisburg, Pa.

VOL. II. No. 8.

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“Roads and Highways in Eastern Pennsylvania and in Lebanon County.”

BY HON. THEO. B. KLEIN.

In the early days of the Proprietaries Government of the Penns, in the granting of lands to individuals an allowance of six per cent. was given for roads, which allowance provided amply for the opening up of avenues of trade and travel to the settlers of those early days. The Commonwealth, on attaining possession of the lands of the Penns, continued to grant the same allowance, and in all of its domain up to the present time the same allowance is made for the purpose aforementioned. In order to develop the young Commonwealth, construction of roads became important so that trade and travel between the settlements in the interior and the seaport might be established and ready communication be kept open between the developing sections of the new State. The Commonwealth, besides the granting of this percentage to the land purchasers, contributed liberally to the construction of the highways. State roads were authorized and turnpike companies were chartered, and thus the pioneer pathways of commerce were commenced. One of the earliest turnpike companies incorporated was the Lancaster Pike, which received its charter in 1792. The route of the turnpike is given in the Act of Assembly as follows: “From the west side of Schuylkill River opposite to the city of Philadelphia, so as to pass near to or over the bridge on Brandywine Creek, near Downingtown, from thence to Witmer’s bridge on the

Connestogæ Creek, and thence to the east end of King street, where the buildings cease in the borough of Lancaster."

The tenth section tells the pike's width: ". . . to be laid out 50 feet wide, 21 feet whereof in breadth, at least, shall be made an artificial road, which shall be bedded with wood, stone, gravel or any other hard substance, well compacted together, a sufficient depth to secure a solid foundation to the same; and the said road shall be faced with gravel, or stone pounded, or other small, hard substance, in such manner as to secure a firm, and, as near as the materials will admit, an even surface, rising toward the middle by a gradual arch."

The next section, which concerns tolls, is interesting. It shows the sort of traffic the road was to accommodate, and its reading brings before the mind herds of cattle, droves of sheep, hogs, oxen and, now and then, a coach and four moving under the blue sky along this white road a hundred years ago, between forests where there were hostile Indians sometimes. The section shows that the tolls were extremely high. It says that the company "shall charge, for every space of ten miles: . . . the following sums of money, and so in proportion for any greater or lesser distance or for any greater or lesser number of sheep, hogs or cattle, viz: For every score of sheep, one-eighth of a dollar; for every score of cattle, one-quarter of a dollar; for every horse and his rider, or led horse, one-sixteenth of a dollar; for every sulkey, with one horse and two wheels, one-eighth of a dollar; for every chariot, coach, stage, wagon, phaeton or chaise with two horses and four wheels, one quarter of a dollar; for either of the carriages last mentioned, with four horses, three-eighths of a dollar; for every other carriage of pleasure, under whatever name it may go, the like sums according to the number of wheels and horses drawing the same. And be it further enacted by the aforesaid, that all such carriages as aforesaid, to be drawn by oxen in the whole or partly oxen, two oxen shall be estimated as equal to one horse in charging all the aforesaid tolls, and every mule as equal to one horse."

Nearly every toll, it will be seen, was one-eighth or three-eighths, or five-eighths of a dollar. In those distant days a coin was current in the United States that was called by some a "levy" and by others a "bit." It was not minted here, but in Spain; it was a Spanish real, and its value was $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents. Sometimes it was called a "eleven-penny bit."

To build the turnpike cost \$464,142.31. It was 70 miles long, and thus it cost per mile \$6,629. "There were between Philadelphia and Lancaster," says The Record, "no town, but merely a settlement—and thus the little army of road builders cut their way through what was pretty nearly a wilderness, sleeping sometimes in little shacks that they built along the way. Their work must have been arduous. Often they would interrupt it to replenish their larder with bear meat and with fish. Often, too, they would be in terror of the Indians, for braves in war paint, ran silently in single file through the great forests in those days, busy with some little internecine war, and sometimes white men were taken unawares, bound and tortured horribly by the savages.

The shares had a par value of \$300, and each share consisted of a separate sheep-skin document. Thus, if a man bought ten shares, he did not get one certificate, but ten. Each share had at its head a picture of the road. In this picture a Conestoga wagon drawn by four horses approaches a tollgate. The face of the driver is not visible, but it is easy to believe there is a sour look on it, for we know from the catalogue of rates, that this poor fellow's toll was fifty cents for each ten miles.

The company prospered hugely for a while. Each share paid \$6 a month, or \$72 a year, in 1827; but in 1899 each share paid only twenty-five cents a year; and from then onward nothing, as railroads have superseded the old Conestoga wagon trains as carriers of freight and have rendered the old stage coaches things of the past. From these sources the turnpike derived its great profits in early days.

We have on file in the Department of Internal affairs re-

* The "flip" and "levy" were both Spanish coins, current in this country until recent times, the "flip" at $6\frac{1}{4}$ cents, and the "levy" at $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents. The "flip" originally was the "Flippenny-bit," or "Flippenny-a-bit;" really five pence, or a piece of money of that value, then contracted to the vernacular "flip." In the South, especially in New Orleans, called a "picayune," from the language of the Caribbeans, hence the "*New Orleans Picayune*," newspaper) which was sold at a "picayune." So also the "levy," eleven pence, contracted to the vernacular "levy."

cords of roads authorized in the Eastern Section of the State notably. From Merion to Philadelphia in 1706. One from Chester to Darby in the same year. One from Brandywine to Conestoga in 1718. One from Lancaster to John Spruce's in 1733, and in our own section, one from Harris Ferry on Susquehanna River via Lancaster City to Whiteland township, in Chester County, in "1736". The line of this road began at a locust tree nigh to John Harris ferry thence by its several courses and distances across Pextan Creek, and on over hill and dale across the Sweet Arrow and Quittapahilla, and away a distance of sixty-eight and a half miles across the Brandywine. Other roads were projected as State roads, from Philadelphia to Lancaster in 1767. From Reading to the Susquehanna, at the mouth of Mahanoy creek in 1769. From Philadelphia to Yorktown, via West Chester, in 1790. From Lancaster to Sunbury, via Lebanon and Jonestown, 1820. From Kutztown, Berks county, to Mauch Chunk, in 1829. From Pottsville to the Susquehanna, at Fisher's ferry, in 1831. From Lebanon, via Schaefferstown and Reamstown to Churchtown, Lancaster county, in 1834. From Friedensburg, Schuylkill county, via Pinegrove, to John Harpers, on the Jonestown and Harrisburg road, in 1835. From Schaefferstown, via Reists mill, to Manheim, in 1841. From Allentown to Jonestown, in 1851. All traversing the several counties of the State in its Eastern and Middle section, developing many miles of country and opening up vast areas for agricultural and mining purpose. Along these highways the searcher for employment, and the searcher for adventure wended their footsteps. On these highways the lone horseman rode on his errand of business and pleasure, on these highways the doctor rode upon his trusty steed or in his lofty sulky to the bedside of his widely separated patients and after administering to their immediate wants, rode along in contemplation of the next phase of the disease and the possible result of the treatment. On these highways the minister travelled from parish to parish, gathering inspiration from the views from the

hill tops, and an appetite from the health-giving breezes through the trees, as he went on his missions from congregation to congregation. On these highways the rugged wagons, as captain of the ship, carrying the merchandise of the farmer to the seaport and the merchandise of the merchant to the new country, sang cheerily to his team as they stepped briskly along with their load, to the music of the silvery bells chiming from the arch above their necks, in sunshine and in rain, until their destination was reached.

The associations between the old road, the rugged wagoner, the stalwart teams, the old Conestoga wagons and the many hostelries that studded the roadsides at intervals for the accomodation of the caravans, of the olden time, is thus described by Buchanan Reade in his "Wagoner of the Alleghanies :"

"In days long gone, the Ship and Sheaf
Was deemed of goodly inns the chief :
The Sheaf because the wagoner there.
The captain of the highway ship,
Fresh breathing of his mountain air,
Hung on the wall his coat and whip :
And farmer, bringing his stores to town,
And drover, who drove his cattle down,
Conversed of pastures and of sheaves,
The season's drouth, or ruinous rain,
Or told of fabulous crops of grain,
Or fields where grazed incredible beeves.

The latch went up : the door was thrown
Awide, as if by a tempest blown :
While, bold as an embodied storm,
Strode in a dark and stalwart form,
And all the lights in the sudden wind
Flared as he slammed the door behind.
He spoke as to a restive team,
His team was of the wildest breed
That ever tested wagoner's skill ;

Each was a fierce, unbroken steed,
Curbed only by his giant will :
And every ostler quaked with fear
What time his loud bells wrangled near.

On many a dangerous mountain track
While oft the tempest burst its wrack,
When lightning, like his mad whip lash,
While round the team its crooked flash,
And horses reared in fiery fright,

While near them burst the thunder crash,
Then heard the gale his voice of might.

The peasant from his window gazed,

And, staring through the darkened air,
Saw, when the sudden lightning blazed,

The fearful vision plunging there !

And oft on many a wintry hill

He dashed from out the vale below,

And heaved his way through drifts of snow,
While all his wheels, with voices shrill,

Shrieked to the frosty air afar,

As if December's tempest car,
Obeyed the winter's maniac will.

Ye knew him well, ye mountain miles,

Throughout your numerous dark defiles :
Where Juniata leaps away

On feathery wings of foam and spray ;
Or queenly Susquehanna smiles,

Proud in the grace of her thousand isles ;

"Where Poet and Historian fling"

Their light o'er classic Wyoming :

And you, ye green Lancastrian fields,
Rich with the wealth which Ceres yields ;
And Chester's stoned vales and hills,

In depths of rural calm divine,

Where reels the flashing Brandywine,
And dallies with its hundred mills.

On these highways, too, the hopeful youth wended his way to some neighbor's domicile, and soon persuaded the comely maiden to share his joys and sorrows, and together travel along the highway of life. And when the journey was ended the distance was not far to the secluded space; often alongside the well-known road where they now rest, well nigh together.

On the borders of these highways, too, the first settlers laid the foundations of their homes and churches, and builded for generations to come, solid and strong. The native limestone of the Lebanon and Cumberland and Chester Valleys furnished the materials for substantial buildings in those regions. And the sweet music of the bells from many a lofty spire is still heard calling the sturdy yeomanry to worship as in days of their fathers.

As early as 1803 the General Assembly chartered the Downingtown, Ephrata and Harrisburg Turnpike Company. The Governor was authorized to subscribe for 250 shares of the capital stock of the company. This turnpike was the trunk line through the Lebanon Valley as far as a short distance east of Hummelstown, where it branched off towards the Cornwall hills via Campbellstown. The Berks and Dauphin Turnpike Company, incorporated in 1805, connected at the point mentioned and continued down the Lebanon Valley proper via Lebanon to Reading. These roads are still in existence, and the old Berks and Dauphin road maintains its record and is justified in taking toll for the privileges given the traveller, but of the Downingtown road but little can be said in its favor.

In 1814 the Harrisburg and Berlin Turnpike Company^{*} was incorporated, which extended from the west end of the Harrisburg Bridge to Berlin, in Adams county. In 1807 the Harrisburg, Lewistown, Huntingdon and Pittsburg Turnpike was incorporated, and the Governor was authorized to subscribe \$200,000 towards the construction of the road in 1808.

In the Records of the Department I find that the section in which we live is classed as the Middle Road District, which

includes some twenty counties, beginning with Adams on the southern tier, and including Blair, Huntingdon, Union and our own counties of Dauphin and Lebanon.

About 1805 a State Road was organized from Carlisle to Rankin's Forry on the Susquehanna, and in 1812 a road from Kelso's Ferry (Harrisburg) to Maryland State Line. In 1820 a road from Harrisburg Bridge (west end) to Rider's Ferry on the Juniata via Sherman's Creek. In 1822 The Harrisburg and Millerstown Turnpike Company was chartered. In 1829 a road from York via Lewisberry to west end of Harrisburg Bridge. In 1839 from west end of Harrisburg Bridge to Petersburg, Perry county.

The turnpike company from Harrisburg to Pittsburg via Bedford was chartered in 1806. This was the main line up the Cumberland Valley, and was in its time a great thoroughfare to the west. The Commonwealth subscribed \$300,000 to aid in the construction of this road, taking stock therefor, which might be of value now, in these days of mergers and combines and transfers to trolley companies that require rights of way. This road, too, is still gathering toll from the unfortunates who undertake journeys over the rough surface of this unkempt highway, and a trolley line is now sharing part of its domain.

In 1810 The Middletown and Harrisburg Turnpike Road Company was authorized to construct a road from a point at or near Middletown to the line of William Maclay's land, adjoining the upper boundary of the borough of Harrisburg.

We recall the memories of the old line of stage coaches of the Concord build, on the great leather springs, which were used on the turnpike traversing this valley—between Harrisburg and Reading, via our own Lebanon, before the railroad was constructed.

About seven o'clock in the morning, from Colder's stables, at Harrisburg, the lively team of four horses, attached to the mail and passenger coach, drew up to the postoffice on the Market Square, and, after receiving the mail, gathered up the

passengers at the prominent hotels on Market street, and continued its journey out the street and up the great hill into the Lebanon Valley. At Palmyra a relay of horses was made, and about noon Lebanon was reached, where a committee of reception was generally in attendance at the "Eagle," to meet expected friends or to see friends depart, after a fresh team was attached to the coach. The current news was also looked for at the time, for there was no telegraph then. At election times the gathering was large, and any interesting news received individually was announced from a chair in the bar room of the inn to the assembly which consisted of a majority of the dominant party at the time.

By an Act of Assembly, passed the 11th day of March, 1815, it was enacted that William Coleman, Henry Moyer, Samuel Light, John Weidman, Abraham Raguel, Tobias Stoever and Peter Gloninger be appointed commissioners for a company to make an artificial road from the south end of Market street, in the borough of Lebanon, to Cornwall Furnace.

The shares of the company were fixed at the price of 50 dollars per share, and two hundred shares was considered sufficient capital by the enterprise.

Provisions in the Act permitted the managers to construct the road at a width of 16 feet, in such parts of the same as may lead through solid rocks, and provided also, that no toll shall be demanded or taken from any person passing from one part of his or her farm to another part thereof, nor from any person or persons passing to or from any place of worship, funeral, school, election or militia training. In the event of the non-construction of the road within six years, the franchises granted were to revert to the Commonwealth.

Another leaf of legislation relative to Lebanon county limits is contained in the Act of April 11th, 1848, authorizing the Governor to incorporate the North and South Lebanon Turnpike Road Company.

By that Act George Hoffman, George Mark, Abraham

Sherk, Lozenzo L. Lehman, George D. Coleman and George Reinoehl, of North Lebanon ; Samuel Light, Jefferson Sherk, George Lineaweaver, Jacob Weidle, Leonard Zimmerman and John Krause, John Weidman and Levi Kline, of the Borough of Lebanon ; Joseph Zimmerman, Christian Bomberger, Henry Brechbill, John Zinn, George Bowman and Robert W. Coleman, of South Lebanon, in the county of Lebanon, were appointed commissioners and authorized to form a company and receive subscriptions to the capital stock in order to construct a road beginning at a bridge which is erected across the Union Canal at the end of Market street, in the town of North Lebanon ; thence by the nearest and best route through the Borough of Lebanon, crossing the Berks and Dauphin Turnpike, in the Market Square of said borough ; thence by the nearest and best route to John Zinn's mill, in South Lebanon, and thence by the nearest and best route to the Cornwall Ore Bank, in South Lebanon, in said county of Lebanon.

The names of the men connected with this enterprise are familiar to many of you.

The history of the memorable Plank Road, the terminus of which was at the Union Canal, in North Lebanon, and passed through the town by way of Tenth street, is interesting, and the memories of the road, when in its prime, are pleasant, whilst the memories of the same, when dilapidated and in bad repair, are not so pleasant. The corporation, under the name of The Manheim and Lebanon Plank and Turnpike Road Company was granted its privileges to begin operations on the twelfth day of April, 1851, more than half a century ago, and its list of incorporators include the names of twenty-five gentlemen, citizens of Lancaster county, among whom are Clement B. Grubb, A. Bates Grubb and other prominent names, whilst the county of Lebanon furnished the names of Robert Evans, Peter Horst, Peter Bachman, Chas. B. Forney, David S. Hammond, David M. Carmany, Cyrus Shirk, Robert Coleman, Robert W. Coleman, Levi Kline, John Weidman, George Hoffman and Jonathan S. Beckley. We recall two survivors of the number still in our midst.

The commissioners were authorized to construct a road, part plank and part turnpike, or all plank or turnpike, from the north end of Prussia street, in the Borough of Manheim, Lancaster county; thence by the nearest and best route to the Borough of Lebanon, Lebanon county, with all the privileges conferred by the Act, regulating turnpike and plank road companies, with the further privilege of using the whole or any part of a public road between the points specified. The capital stock was fixed at 1,200 shares of twenty-five dollars per share, with privilege to increase, from time to time, to be completed in ten years.

In 1852 the Legislature fixed the tolls on all iron ore, stone—coal, iron and limestone carried over said road, at four cents per ton per mile, which in these days would be considered quite a heavy tariff, especially if obliged to furnish the means of transportation, as the shippers were expected to do. In 1853 the company received permission from the Legislature to borrow 15,000 dollars to complete the road, and by the same Act of Assembly received the privilege of extending their road from the then termination at Mulberry street, in the Borough of Lebanon, to the south side of the Union Canal, in North Lebanon township, Lebanon county, and also to construct lateral branches to the Cornwall Ore Banks, to enable them to transport ore from said bank to and over their main road.

In 1857 a supplement to the original Act was passed, amending the Act, and empowering the company to make the southern terminus at Mount Hope Furnace, Lancaster county, a distance of about nine miles from the then Borough of North Lebanon, which was by the Supplement declared to be the starting point of said road.

At the same time the name of the corporation was changed from the Manheim and Lebanon Plank and Turnpike Road Company to the North Lebanon and Mount Hope Plank and Turnpike Road Company.

In 1860 another Supplement was passed by the Legisla-

ture which permitted the company to terminate the construction of their road at a point on the public road leading from Mount Hope furnace, in Lancaster county, to Cornwall furnace, in Lebanon county, near said Cornwall furnace, and which said point was declared to be the terminus of said North Lebanon and Mount Hope Plank Road Company.

Four years later, viz, 1864, by an Act of Assembly, supplementary to the previous Acts, the name of the North Lebanon and Mount Hope Plank Road and Turnpike Company was changed to the Cornwall Turnpike Company, since which time the sills and planks originally placed, have been removed and a more substantial material substituted, making it a model roadway, rendering it a real highway in every respect, pleasant to be carried over in modern vehicles, whether they be of rubber tire phaetons or steel-rimmed carryalls.

We may almost declare with a certainty that the construction of the old plank road was, as it were, the direct cause of the building of the first North Lebanon Railroad to the Cornwall ore banks. The opposing branches of the iron kings at that time preferred their own manner of transportation, and the owners of the plank road were in a measure superseded by the construction of the railroad.

The engineers of the Union Canal Company, whose chief was the late Col. James Worrall, and principal assistant the late Hother Hage, together with Luther R. Hynicka, Alexander McGowan and others, soon located a line and the construction of the railroad in a reasonable time monopolized the tonnage to and from the far-famed iron mountains.

An interesting item in the history of Lebanon County Roads is found among the Records of your Society, as follows :

“To the Worshipful the Justices of the Court of General Quarter Sessions of the Peace, held at Lancaster for the County of Lebanon on the first Tuesday in August, A. D., 1764.

The Petition of the Majority of the Inhabitants of the Township of Lebanon in said County.

Humbly Showeth :

That a Road leading from Elizabeth Furnace and extending to and through Part of the said Township, Confirmed at the Court of General Quarter Sessions of the Peace, held at Lancaster aforesaid, on the first Tuesday of February last Past, is extremely detrimental to your Petitioners & others, the Inhabitants of the said Township and is manifestly known to contribute to private advantage only, without the least view of Publick benefit.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray that your Worshipps would be pleased to reverse the Confirmation of the said road and your Petitioners in Duty bound will ever pray, &c."

Then follows the signatures of the inhabitants whose interests were not favored :

Heinrich ———,

Adam Orth,

Jorg ———,

Hans ^{his} x Brand,
_{mark}

Mathes Schmutz,

Christian Brand,

Adam Brand,

Conrad Armdorff,

Jacob Zollicker,

Abraham Weidtmann,

Jacob Emxell,

Zalmo Schneider,

Christoph. Embich,

Heinrich Mahder,

Abraham Poland,

Casper Schardmann,

Mathias Reinhart,

Jerick Erlinger,

Jerg Adam Eicardt,

Phillip Kohr,

Henry Miller,

Christian Schat,

Jacob Hatner,

Gerg Hans Halter,

Michael Balmer,

Christian Miller,

Johannes Hüber,

Johannes Rowalth,

Hans Urich Schnaebli,

Michael Wittmer,

Peter Yotter,

Heinrich Light,

Michael Bachman,

Phillip Greenawalt,

Abraham Hans ^{his} c Groh,
_{mark}

Rudolph Hab,

Peter Schindel,

Johan Peter Ritscher,

John Conradt Brown,

Valentine Keller,

Michael Riedt,	Stoffel Schnaebli,
Abraham Droschel,	Heinrich Smitt,
Michael Wagner,	Peter Kinzer,
Johan Adam ^{sin} x Reifwein,	David Buhler,
mark	the
Christoph Müller,	Isac x Shafer,
Hans Georg Miller,	mark of
Francis Grandadam,	Jacob Licht,
Peter P. G. ^{sin} Gingerich,	Hans Licht,
mark	Anastastius Uehler,
Jacob Groff,	Michael Brown,
Peter Reist,	Adam Stager,
Martin M ^{sin} Lichti,	Petter Schott,
mark	Christian Meass,
Pater Yordi,	Jacob Kummerlin,
Jacob Heitzmiller,	Michael Tice,
	Abraham ———.

We are not informed as to whether the Worships appealed to reversed the confirmation or not. It is more than probable, however, that the interests of the proprietors of the properties about Elizabeth Furnace required the road, and that the confirmation was not disturbed or reversed.

The Petition (for the road which was confirmed by the Court) is not at hand, but would be interesting in the recalling of the names of the inhabitants who desired the road. It is or should be on file among the Lancaster County archives.

There will also be found among the Records of the Lebanon County Historical Society the following proceedings relative to the laying out of a road from Lebanon to the great road from "Harris Ferry" to Williamsburg, now Jonestown.

"To the Worshipful the Justices of the Court of Quarter Sessions to be held at Lancaster for the County of Lancaster, the first Tuesday in September, 1769.

The Petition of divers Inhabitants of the Township of Lebanon and others humbly Showeth :

That your petitionors labor under great Inconveniences for want of a Publick Road leading from the town of Lebanon

to Hanover Township, there to intersect the great Road leading from Harris Ferry to Williams Burg. Said Road to begin at a corner of a Lot in possession of Jacob Zeigler, about a half mile distant from Lebanon town at the great road leading from said Town to Harris Ferry, from thence along the line of said Zeigler's Lot on the Lands of Philip Gloninger to the lands of Martin Funk and through the same to or near the English Church in Said Township. Thence through the Lands of I Umberger, Jr., and Conrad , or near the House of Abraham Carman, thence by John Deetz and Laurentz Ryder's Lands to Swatara Creek and crossing the same ; thence through the Lands of Mathias Poor, in Hanover Township, and from thence the nearest and best way to intersect the great Road leading from Harris Ferry to William's Ferry, near the plantation of Alexander Kid, in Hanover township, aforesaid. Which road if laid out will be of great use to the back inhabitants to bring their produce to market and also very useful to the Publick in General.

Your Petitioners therefore Humbly pray your Worships to take the premises into consideration and Appoint proper Persons to view and lay out the said Road. And your Petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

This Petition is signed by

Heinrich Ritcher,
Richard Robinson,
John Robinson,
Thomas Robinson,
John Robinson,
Phillip Greenawalt,
Christ. Wegman, Jr.,
Daniel Stroh,
Casper Schnebli,
Johan ———,
Peter Kucher,
Heinrich Rahder,
Ludwig Pohlman,
Heinrich Licht,

Leonhard Umberger,
Georg Tittle,
Johannes Dietz,
Martin Funk,
Abraham Miller,
Philip Marsteller,
Abraham Weidtmann,
George Strow,
Hans Ulrich Schnaebli,
Jacob Licht,
Johannes Umberger,
Jacob Laübscher,
Abraham ———,
Adam Bair.

A prominent road in its day was that from Reading to Sunbury, or, in early times, Fort Augusta, the construction of which was, by proceedings on record which follows, viz :

At a council held at Philadelphia on Saturday, the 30th of January, 1766.

Present.

The Honourable John Penn, Esquire, Lieutenant Governor.

Benjamin Chew, Lynford Lurdner, James Tilghman, Esquires.

The Governor laid before the Board a petition from a very considerable number of the inhabitants of Berks county, setting forth that if a provincial road was laid out in the most convenient places from the town of Reading, in the said county, to Fort Augusta, it would greatly tend to advance the trade and commerce with the Indians, who are settled at the head of the Susquehanna river, and to preserve the Friendship and Peace with them ; and would also save great Change and Expense in transporting Skins and Furs from thence, as the Distance Fort to Philadelphia by way of Reading is much shorter than any other ; and, therefore, praying the Governor in Council to appoint proper Commissioners to lay out a King's Highway or public Road from the said Town of Reading, at Fort Augusta, and to direct measures to be taken for opening and clearing the same.

The Board, taking this matter into consideration, are of the opinion that such a road will be of very great public utility, but that, as part of the Country through which it would pass to Fort Augusta is not yet purchased of the Indians, a road ought not be opened beyond the Line of the last purchase.

It is therefore Agreed and Ordered that a Provincial Road be laid out from the Town of Reading through the County of Reading in the most Convenient and Direct Courses towards Fort Augusta as far as the said Line, or to such part of the River Susquehanna between the mouth of Mahanoy Creek,

and where the said Line intersects the said River, as may be found to be of the greatest public use and convenience.

And the Board do accordingly appoint and order Jonas Seely, John Patton, Henry Christ, James Scull, Frederick Weiser, Benjamin Spycker, Mark Bird, Christiam Lam and Thomas Jones Juris or any six of them to lay out the same road and make a return of the Courses and Distances thereof into the Provincial Secretary's Office within six months from this day, in order to be confirmed by the Governor & Council, if the same shall be approved.

By Order of the Board.

JOSEPH SHIPPEN, JR.,

Clk Council.

In accordance with the order just cited a survey was made and the following report was presented :

To the Honourable John Penn, Esqr., Lieutenant Governor and Commander in Chief of the Province of Pennsylvania & Counties of New Castle, Kent & Sussex on Delaware, &c.

We, the Subscribers, do humbly certify to your Honor that in Obedience to the order of your honor, and the Council hereunto annexed, We have viewed the road therein mentioned and have laid the same out according to the courses & distances following, viz : Beginning at the east end of Penn Street, in the town of Reading and county of Berks & extending thence through the same, to the bank of the River Schuylkill, west 346 perches; thence south 87, w. 33 perches across said River Schuylkill. Several different courses and distances carries the line to George Krick's, and 684 perches more to Sinking Spring Tavern. The next point mentioned is Coccosing Creek, and 700 perches more marks the place of Jacob Rherer's whose next neighbor noted was John Echards. The line then passed thro Mr. Allen's land, and thence to

Yost Fisher's and Benj. Weiser's, and in 344 perches more passed through Middle Town to the end of Second street ; thence up Second street 33 perches. Tulpehocken Creek is next crossed, after which in 600 perches John Rice's Tavern is reached. 475 perches carries the line to Nicholas Kinzer's, and from his place to Godfrey Rherer's Tavern, which is now Rehdersburg, none other points are noted. The next point is the crossing of Sweet Arrow Creek, and then Henry Derr's House, after which for a distance of almost 1,200 perches, no points are noted until Fort Henry is reached. Not very far beyond the Fort the lower end of the "Dugg" Road is noted, and the next point on the Ridge of the Kittatinny Mountain, and 150 perches more to the foot of the hill,—342 perches to Swanger's Saw Mill. After 125 perches a note is made, "At 10 prs. to a branch of Sweetarrow." A second branch of Sweetarrow is marked after 460 more perches are run, then comes Jacob Metz's and the old feeding place 470 perches beyond the line then runs up Sweetarrow 175 perches, and is then crossed. The next point noted is on the Broad Mountain, and 475 perches beyond is marked the old path to Liken's Valley. Some 300 perches further on a Branch of Sweetarrow is again marked, and 241 perches further on marks the top of the highest rise. 298 perches beyond marks a noted spring by the old path. Another 100 perches and the foot of the Broad Mountain is reached. 1,900 perches further on comes Deep Creek, near by Jacob Miller's place. 1,000 perches further on carries the line to Oderwelder's place, 325 perches more to Pine Creek at Gap. The next point noted is Spread Eagle, near to Maghontoga Creek. Then to a branch of Swober Creek, and then to Maghannoy Creek, and 104 perches to a white oak on the Bank of Susquehanna River & South side of the Maghannoy Mountain. And the Commissioners conclude.

Which road We beg to return to your Honor and Council, agreeable to the directions of the said order.

Witness our hands.

JONAS SEELY,
JOHN PATTON,
FRIDRICK WEISER,
BENJAMIN SPYCKER,
CHRISTIAN LAUR,
THOS. JONES JUNS.

Confirmed in Council the 19th January, 1769.

The old roads alluded to were traversed at all hours of the day and night, and formed the lines of communication in the several directions between neighbors, communities, towns and villages. But in this age of progress and activity, the roads of the early days have in a great measure been abandoned by the majority, who have no time to plod along in coaches at the rate of five miles an hour. The iron horse has taken the place of the brawny steed and the bands of steel bear the precious burdens of the traveling public, as they are whisked along at forty miles an hour, annihilating time and space.

In this day and generation but few realize the great change or know of the pleasure of a jaunt over hill and dale with goodly companions, over an old-fashioned highway, with an old-fashioned conveyance, tarrying at old-fashioned hostelrys with old fashioned people, until ready to resume the jaunt, to enjoy new scenes which loom up in every direction, giving extreme pleasure, satisfaction, enjoyment and instruction undreamed of by the sleepy traveller flying along on the rigid steel.

And so we hold in reverence the old highway and its associations, but also maintain a profound respect for the improvements, required in this fast age of the new century, which have almost entirely superseded the old road for commercial and other purposes.

